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T R E A T I S E  
O N T H E  
U S E A N D A B U S E  
O F  
M I N E R A L W A T E R S :

A L S O

Rules necessary to be observed by Invalids  
who visit the Chalybeate Springs of the  
Old and New Tunbridge Wells.

TOGETHER WITH

Some REMARKS on the immoderate Use of  
S E A W A T E R.

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By HUGH SMITH, M. D.  
AUTHOR of the FAMILY PHYSICIAN,  
And of LETTERS to MARRIED WOMEN upon the  
MANAGEMENT of INFANTS, with a View to pre-  
vent the Diseases incident to Children.

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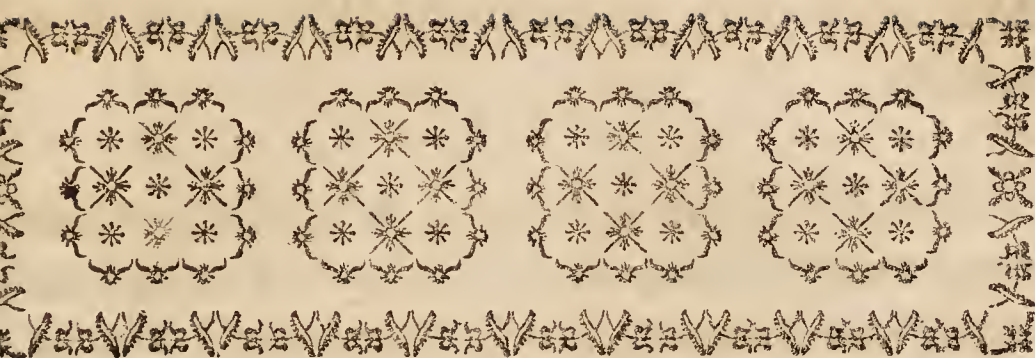
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M I N E R A L W A T E R S.

HE Medicinal Use of Mineral Waters has at all Times engaged the Attention of the most able Physicians, who have pursued the Practice of Physic upon rational Principles; and Experience has convinced Mankind of the great Benefits which may be expected from them, when properly administered, even in the most debilitated Constitutions. But the noblest Bounties of Nature are oftentimes abused; and the Folly of



Man frequently perverts the Wisdom of Providence.

In no one Instance, perhaps, is this Observation more clearly exemplified, than by the absurd and ridiculous Mode of administering these Waters. The present erroneous Maxims and Opinions disappoint thousands of Invalids of the Benefit they might receive from a proper Use of Mineral Waters.

Even the salubrious Waters of the Bristol Well are often brought into Discredit, by the improper Conduct of Patients; and the Virtues of the Bath Waters are likewise called in question, by many Persons who have returned to their own Homes with Discontent, because they have, by their own Imprudence, disappointed themselves of the medicinal Efficacy of the Spring.

The same Observation holds good with respect to the improper Use of Sea Water. How many daily sacrifice their Health and Strength by dosing themselves with Sea Water? Many there are who, from a Kind of Fashion, pass a considerable Part of the Summer at the various Bathing-Places upon our Coasts. They professedly go thither for Pleasure only, and punish themselves, from the strong Force of

of Example, by nauseous and daily Drenches of Sea Water—till at length they become so relaxed and weak, they are no longer able to resist the oppressive Heat of the Summer, and fall a Sacrifice to some of the worst Kind of Fevers.

These Facts are so notorious that I need not dwell upon them. I mention them only to caution the Public at large against such pernicious Consequences.

At Bath, and at the Bristol Wells, there are able Physicians; who will, *I trust*, direct their Patients in the proper Use of those Waters, if they are wise enough to apply to them, and prudently follow their Directions.

But with respect to the Use of Sea Water, and also the Chalybeate Waters, Mankind in general are their own Physicians. Those who frequent the Bathing-Places, the Chalybeate Spring of Tunbridge in Kent, or that of the New Tunbridge Wells near Islington—*nineteen out of twenty* of them are governed by their own Opinions, or by the Example of others they meet at such Places, who are as much mistaken as themselves.



To such Invalids, therefore, I particularly address myself.—The World, it must be confessed, are too fond of Quackery—but if they will continue to quack themselves, it is at least meritorious to prevent them doing a real Injury to their Constitutions, by putting them in a better Way of managing themselves.

I *however* think it my Duty, as a Well-wisher to Mankind, to advise every one who is really ill to consult the Person who has the Care of his Health, not only as to what should be taken preparatory to the Use of the Waters, but likewise as to the Quantity proper to be drunk, the Regimen necessary to be pursued while he is drinking the Waters; and, *in many Cases*, to be directed to some little medicinal Aid, which may be thrown in, at proper Intervals, to assist the Efficacy of the Waters themselves. Without these Precautions, half of the Patients deprive themselves of the Advantages they might receive from the Use of Mineral Waters.

With regard to the improper Use of the Sea Water *internally* I have already given a Caution. And perhaps many of those who frequent the Bathing-Places, may find some of the following Hints worthy their Attention, especially Invalids.

I come now to speak of *the native Chalybeate Water*.—It is a powerful Remedy for the curative Intention of most chronic Complaints. Its Efficacy *alone*, when properly administered, will remove many Disorders. When aided and assisted by the Judgment of an able Practitioner, it will oftentimes combat the most obstinate and complicated Diseases.

Such are our Springs at both the Tunbridge Wells—in my Opinion, both equally good and excellent, and, drunk upon the Spot, *preferable* to those of the German Spa when brought to England. The Reasons are well known to such as are acquainted with Chemistry.

I call it *a native Chalybeate Water*, because it cannot be counterfeited by Art.—In all artificial Solutions of Steel an Acid must necessarily be used; this gives a Roughness and Acrimony to the Water, which sufficiently distinguishes the artificial from the real; and the *artificial* falls greatly short of the *real* in Point of its medicinal Virtues.

There is another Excellence in the Springs we are now speaking of:—they are totally free from any of those cathartic Salts, with which the Scarborough, and many other Mineral Waters are impregnated besides the Steel.

Such



Such Waters may be properly styled compound Mineral Waters;—they are different in their Operation from those of the simple Kind we are now speaking of, and not to be compared with them in Point of their medicinal Efficacy.

It is foreign to my present Purpose to enter into the chemical Analysis of the native Chalybeate Waters, and indeed, at this Time, their component Particles are so well known that it is altogether unnecessary. I am speaking to Invalids, who wish only to experience their Virtues, and to be instructed in the proper Method of using them.

The native Chalybeate Waters are salutary in most chronic Complaints.

*Chronic* is a Term of Art, derived from the Greek Word *CHRONOS*, *Time*, and comprehends every Disorder which has been of long standing: It is used in direct Opposition to *acute* Complaints, such as the general Kind of Fevers, &c. *Acute* Complaints necessarily confine Patients to the Bed, or the sick Chamber; and terminate quickly, either by a favourable, or an unfavourable Crisis. On the contrary, Patients are seldom confined by *chronic* Complaints, and these are not only tedious and troublesome, but often fatal in the End.

Under



Under this Head may be ranged all such Errors in the Constitution as proceed from a debilitated and relaxed State of the muscular Fibres ; or a Weakness of the nervous System.

Sometimes these Errors happen from the natural Tenderness and Delicacy of the Constitution ; oftentimes from Indolence, or an inactive sedentary Life ; frequently they are the unhappy Consequences of a long and painful Illness—of Intemperance—of the improper Use of violent, or mercurial Medicines.

Hereditary Evils frequently entail such Errors, and they often arise from a Variety of accidental Circumstances, that no human Wisdom can possibly foresee, or guard against.

The following are justly to be ranged under this numerous Tribe of chronic Complaints.

*Nervous Diseases of all Denominations.*

*Hypochondriac and Hysteric Complaints.*

*Glandular Obstructions in both Sexes.*

*Asthmas, especially those of the spasmodic Kind.*

*Loss of Appetite and Indigestion.*

*Nervous Head-achs and involuntary Twitchings.*

*Dropsical Complaints of every Denomination.*

*Dejection of Spirits and painful Watchings.*

*Profuse Sweats and Hectic Fevers.*

*Impurities in the Blood and animal Juices.*

C

Blotches

*Blotches and scorbutic Eruptions upon the Skin.*

*All bilious Complaints without a Fever.*

*Disorders in the urinary Passages.*

*Paralytic and Gouty Complaints, &c. &c.*

It is not my present Business to describe at large this terrible List of human Infirmities.—It is a painful Task to enumerate them. *Unfortunately*, the greatest Number are too well known, and too sensibly felt, by Patients themselves. The following Observations, *however*, may not be unseasonable. Nervous Symptoms deceive Men more than any others; and when these Errors have got fast hold of the Constitution, the Patient becomes intolerably wretched—he fancies at Times that he labours under most of the Diseases before-mentioned; and being wearied out, with trying different Prescriptions in vain, his Patience is exhausted, he despairs of Relief, and gives himself over as lost. Nevertheless, his Case *perhaps* may not be so bad as he supposes it to be, if there be any tolerable Degree of Strength remaining in the Constitution. It is true, that his Misfortunes center in one general Evil; and produce, in the true and literal Sense of the Word, a *wandering Gout*.

This is a formidable and a treacherous Enemy. It oftentimes assails us unexpectedly, and if the Patient be not happy enough, by skilful Treatment, to have it eradicated altogether, or at least



least thrown upon the Extremities, he falls a pitiable Sacrifice, and oftentimes pays the great Debt of Nature before half his Days are run.

These are serious Facts. But it is one great Point towards a Cure to know the Disease. I speak this from my own Feelings—from the Comfort I now experience, by enjoying a better State of Health than formerly. I have also the further Satisfaction of having been instrumental, under Providence, in the restoring of many miserable Beings, labouring under the Influence of this cruel and complicated Disease, to a State of Comfort, Health, and Happiness.—They little imagined their Complaints to be a wandering Gout, till a regular Fit upon the Extremities proved the Truth of my Prognostics, and relieved them from their Infirmities. These are great Inducements to me to endeavour to put others upon a right Track, to recover their lost Health, together with their Strength and Spirits.

*Chronic Complaints* are totally opposite to inflammatory Diseases, which require Evacuations to reduce the quick, hard, and throbbing Pulse, and pull down the animal Strength. In chronic Complaints, muscular Motion is universally oppressed, the Pulse languid, and the Strength of the Constitution much below Par. Therefore, unless accidental Circumstances intervene, Bleed-

ing is improper, violent Cathartics are injurious, and all Evacuations which tend to reduce the Strength of the Patient must be avoided: such Practice is unwarrantable, unskilful, fatal. Nature, in chronic Complaints, requires a Spur; and the native Chalybeate Water, when properly administered, is a powerful Spur indeed—but many unskilful Riders are continually thrown out of the Course, by using it too furiously.

It is a ludicrous, but a true Observation, that the World, in general, think they cannot have too much of a good Thing: Hence the common Blessings of Life oftentimes become the Sources of Misery. The hospitable Table is thus abused by the voracious Glutton, while the beastly Drunkard has Reason to curse the generous Juice of the Grape. But will any one presume, from these Considerations, to argue, that Food is not necessary for the Support of Man? or that generous Wines are not refreshing Cordials to the Temperate and the Wise? It is not the proper Use, but the absurd Abuse, that renders many Things poisonous, which are, in themselves, not only innocent, but even salutary to animal Life.

To bring this Observation home to our present Purpose—I mean first to speak against the Abuse of the native Chalybeate Water—It is a mistaken Notion and a vulgar Error, that Patients cannot  
drink



drink too much of this Water.—I have often heard Men boast of the very large Quantity they drink of it daily ; and of its wonderful Effects in passing off by the Bowels, especially by Urine. They ignorantly imagine that all its Virtues depend upon its passing off quickly, and by this erroneous Conduct, many Persons deprive themselves of the Benefit they might otherwise receive from the Waters. A Pint of the Tunbridge Waters, for they are nearly similar, contains about four Grains of Steel. In my Opinion this is a sufficient Quantity for the strongest Constitutions, and too large a Dose for delicate and nervous Patients. This Doctrine is *perhaps* new, but I hope to prove that it is true likewise.

I do not wish the Public to adopt it rashly. No Man has a Right to expect another to give up his own Opinions, unless he can convince him that they are wrong. So, *likewise*, no Man has a Right to expect another to *think* as he does, unless he can convince him that the Thoughts are right. It has ever been my Study, with all Persons who labour under chronic Complaints, to endeavour to make them clearly comprehend the curative Intentions of the Regimen they are to pursue. By this Means their rational Confidence is engaged, and they steadily conduct themselves thro' the Course prescribed. Such Patients must be convinced that a Physician understands their Cases, before they will submit themselves to his Directions. And, indeed,

indeed, it will be impracticable to give the intelligent Reader an adequate Idea of the daily Abuse of Chalybeate Waters, without entering a little into the immediate Causes, as well as the curative Intentions, of chronic Complaints. For this Purpose I must introduce to his Acquaintance a most accurate medical Inquirer: an Author that has ever been in the highest Reputation with all Men of Learning who have perused his Works. The following Aphorisms of Sanctorius are applicable to chronic Complaints, and will fully illustrate the present Subject. His Authority is not to be doubted; and I beg the Aphorisms may be perused with Attention.

#### SANCTORIUS'S APHORISMS.

*“ If a Physician who has the Care of another’s  
 “ Health is acquainted only with the sensible Sup-  
 “ plies and Evacuations; and knows nothing of the  
 “ Waste that is daily made by Insensible Perspi-  
 “ ration; he will only deceive his Patient, and  
 “ never cure him.*

*“ To evacuate too much by Stool, Urine, or  
 “ Sweat, and perspire less than usual, is bad.*

*“ Whensoever Nature is disturbed in the Business  
 “ of Perspiration, she soon begins to be defective in  
 “ many more of the animal Functions.*

*“ They who feed or purge in the Hours when  
 “ they should most perspire, which are those in the  
 “ Morning,*



“ Morning, are very much the worse for it, because  
 “ thereby they hinder Perspiration.

“ Imperceptible Perspiration lightens the Body  
 “ more than all the sensible Evacuations together;  
 “ for after Sleep every one may perceive himself  
 “ lighter, without any of the sensible Secretions;  
 “ because he REALLY is so, by about three Pounds.

“ Sixteen Ounces of Urine are generally evacuated  
 “ in the Space of one Night; four Ounces are eva-  
 “ cuated by Stool, and forty Ounces and upwards  
 “ by Perspiration.

“ There is as much carried off by insensible Per-  
 “ spiration in the Space of a natural Day, as by  
 “ Stool in the Course of five Days.

“ What must then be thought of those Physicians  
 “ who, in all Manner of Distempers, have Regard  
 “ only to what is evacuated by Stool and Urine,  
 “ and never take any Notice of the Discharges by  
 “ insensible Perspiration? ” \*

\* Insensible Perspiration is a very comprehensive Expression. It means not only what is daily carried off by the Pores of the Skin, but what passes off likewise by the Breath, which Sanctorius informs us amounts to half a Pound in the Course of a Day. It also comprehends the internal glandular Secretions. But such as wish to be further informed, may consult his Aphorisms at large. I am well aware of the Difference of our Climate and Manner of Living. Sanctorius was Professor at Padua in Italy, where these Observations were made.—But Dr. Keil of Northampton confirms the Principles; although he differs something, but not to affect our Arguments, in the daily Evacuations.

These

These Aphorisms being clearly comprehended, my Reader will be able to accompany me in the following Narrative without any Difficulty, and, I hope, with Pleasure.

Let us first take a cursory View of Nutrition: Animal Life is supported by the Food we daily receive. When the Aliments have passed thro' a State of Digestion, the grossest Parts, unfit for Nutrition, are carried off by Stool; the next impure Parts go off by Urine; and the Remainder, which may be fairly estimated at one half of our daily Nourishment, ought to be carried off by insensible Perspiration; that is, by the Pores of the Skin, by the Breath, and the various glandular Secretions. So long as these Functions are properly performed, Man continues in Health; but when a Redundancy of crude and imperfect Particles are retained in the Blood and Juices, which Nature intended to be thrown off by insensible Perspiration, the Body becomes diseased. The bold and forcible Efforts of the Constitution to throw off this intolerable Load produce acute Complaints. The feeble Efforts of a too delicate, nervous, and relaxed Constitution, produce chronic Complaints. These may be properly stiled the immediate Causes; but as chronic Complaints differ from each other, so also their first or remote Causes are different: Nevertheless, it is this Load of crude and imperfect Humours which produce the general Errors in all Constitutions, and the  
general



general curative Intentions are the same. An active Stimulus is necessary to be thrown into the Constitution, to be retained in the Circulation—to stimulate the excretory and internal Glands—to break, divide, and subtilize these crude Particles floating in the Blood and Juices, so as to expel them by Insensible Perspiration—and ultimately to brace up the relaxed Fibres, and strengthen the nervous System. Having thus explained the Nature of chronic Complaints in a simple, plain, and familiar Manner, I trust that it is unnecessary to use any farther Argument to prove the Absurdity of directing chalybeate Waters to pass off quick by the Bowels, especially by the urinary Passages.\*

Before I proceed to Rules for drinking the Waters, altho' it is the Province of the Physician *only* to consider and to remove the first and remote Causes of chronic Complaints, I shall touch slightly upon some of them, well known to Patients themselves, with a View to guard against their pernicious Consequences. A Want of proper Air and Exercise, irregular Hours, and Intemperance; the Indulgence of irregular Passions, and all such Pursuits as relax the Constitution, and render the nervous System too exquisitely sensible. For this Reason delicate Habits of Body are continually subject to them;

\* If my Reader be satisfied in this Point, he will readily agree with me, that a Pint of these Waters is a full Dose.

and they are the constant Attendants of advanced Life. Even Disappointments and Vexations, from which no Mortal is exempt, by long Continuance will unhinge the animal Œconomy. Dwelling incessantly upon disagreeable Objects enervates the Mind of Man; and such is the relative Connection betwixt the mental and corporeal Faculties, that the Mind cannot long sustain great Afflictions, without the Body being disordered likewise.

Hence it is evident, that a Dejection of the Spirits alone will, in the Course of Time, produce real bodily Complaints; which must be removed before the natural Chearfulness of such Patients can return; and they oftentimes prove intolerable Burthens.

What can be more distressing than a Loss of Appetite, and a Loss of Strength, accompanied with a total Dejection of the animal Spirits? Nothing surely—except the daily Insult of being told, by their mistaken Friends, that they must keep up their Spirits—that they must not give way to their Complaints, and that they might be well if it was not their own Fault. Alas! they little think, or know, what such unhappy Beings feel. It would be more rational to tell them to change their Bodies—it being impossible for them to support their Spirits, till the Errors in their Constitutions are removed. Such Patients are under the Influence of a real Disease. Were  
it



it possible for these mistaken Friends to change Situations, but for a single Hour, with those who are *pleasantly*, but *cruelly*, called *bippish*, a Tendernefs and Concern for their Misfortunes would take place of Anger and Rebuke.

#### RULES FOR DRINKING THE WATERS.

Preparatory to drinking the Waters, some gentle Evacuations by Stool are necessary. Mild Cathartics are to be preferred, especially such as cleanse the first Passages; those of the more violent and heating Kind are to be avoided.

During the Summer Months, the chalybeate Waters should be taken fasting, and in the early Part of the Morning, before the Heat of the Day renders Exercise fatiguing.

Whatever be the chronic Complaint, no Medicine should be administered till Noon. Food should be first taken into the Stomach; and any other Breakfast is preferable to Tea.

During the Winter Months these Waters should be drunk betwixt the Time of Breakfast and Dinner. At this Season of the Year those Hours are the most proper for Exercise; and Exercise is essentially necessary to produce salutary Effects from the Use of chalybeate Waters; as will be shewn hereafter. May I be permitted

to hope that I shall claim the Attention of the Public upon this Point? Many Persons reside near the Chalybeate Springs in Winter, who are at too great a Distance, in the Summer Months, to reap any material Benefit from the Waters, which ought ever to be taken upon the Spot; and Experience has convinced us, that the Chalybeate Springs are in as high a State of Perfection in frosty Weather as at Midsummer. Other powerful Arguments present themselves upon this Occasion. In all Habits of Body, insensible Perspiration is considerably lessened, during the Winter Months. The Irregularity of a Town Life *also* tends to relax and debilitate the Constitution. After passing the Night, in that Round of Dissipation which at present too much engages the Attention of the Public, even the Ladies themselves must confess the uncomfortable Feelings of the Morning.—What, then, must the Men of Pleasure suffer, who too often indulge themselves in every Species of Debauchery during their riotous Nights? The exhilarating Quality of the Chalybeate Waters will prove the best Cordial upon these Occasions, and tend to produce that Flow of Spirits which is the great Reward of Temperance.

Chalybeate Waters are not intended to promote any of the sensible Evacuations. They are to be received into the Habit, to correct the Impurities of the Blood and animal Juices; to  
remove



remove glandular Obstructions; to promote insensible Perspiration; to brace up relaxed Fibres; and to strengthen weak Nerves: Therefore an immediate Benefit can seldom be expected from them. Errors of long standing, that have taken fast Root in the Constitution, require some Time to be eradicated. For this Reason, such as are really ill should be very regular, for the first Month, in the daily Use of Chalybeate Waters. After that Period they may relax occasionally; but those Patients will act wisely who continue them pretty constantly for some Months. Such Persons as reap an Advantage from the Waters need not be reminded of this, nor of returning to them again in the following Seasons. Inclination, if not Necessity, will prompt them to revisit the reviving Chalybeate Springs.

We are now come to the most arduous Part of our Subject, the Quantity *proper* to be taken of these Waters. We have already cautioned the Public against too large a Dose; but it is not so easy, *in all Cases*, to adjust the proper Quantity. In bilious Complaints, and where there are Errors in the first Passages, that Proportion will offend the Stomach, occasion the Cholic and other Inconveniencies, which may be taken with great Propriety where no such Disorders exist. But as I have before mentioned the Necessity of preparing the Stomach and Bowels, by some proper Evacuations, for the Reception of Chalybeate Waters, this Inconvenience cannot be  
more

more effectually guarded against by general Directions.

In a Word, *therefore*, at all Times, and by all Patients, this should be the governing Rule of their Conduct—never to take so large a Dose of Chalybeate Water as to occasion a quick Discharge by Urine, or to produce purging Stools; and, indeed, never to take so large a Quantity as to become a Weight, that may oppress the Stomach, cause Flatulencies and Tremblings, or render the Head light and uncomfortable, as if in some Measure intoxicated. Where the Constitution is too delicate, and the nervous System is too exquisitely sensible, surprising as it may appear to those who are unacquainted with these Waters, even small Doses will sometimes produce a Giddiness; especially at the beginning of the Course. Thus much for general Rules.—To descend to Particulars; a Quarter of a Pint will be sufficient for weak and delicate Persons to begin with; this Quantity may be gradually increased, as their own Observations direct, so as no sensible Evacuations are too quickly promoted, or the Inconveniencies before-mentioned experienced. But half a Pint, or a little more, will prove a full Dose for such Patients. I would recommend taking it at two or three Draughts, waiting a Quarter of an Hour or longer between. Persons of stouter Stamina, and whose Constitutions are not so feeble, may begin with a little larger Dose, using the same Precautions; and  
such



such Patients may, if no Obstacle arises, take a Pint for their full Quantity.

But as accidental Circumstances will intervene, if any of the Inconveniencies before recited should be experienced, at any one Period during the Course of Chalybeate Waters, the Quantity must be immediately decreased, till such Difficulties be removed \*.

It is farther to be remarked that Exercise should ever be used between the Draughts of the Water; and that of walking briskly is preferable to all other Exercise. It wonderfully promotes the Efficacy of the Chalybeate Water, prevents its passing off too quickly by Urine, and if a gentle Perspiration, not amounting to a Sweat, can be promoted, it is a sure Prognostic of immediate Benefit; that Flow of Spirits which accompanies it, will convince every Patient of the Truth of the Observation.

I am the more particular in enforcing this Rule, because the general Indolence which attends chronic Complaints is too apt to induce Patients to retire to the Rooms, and sit motionless, the Moment they have taken the Waters.

\* I must add a friendly Caution, the Propriety of which speaks for itself, that whenever a costive Habit of Body prevails, and in such other Cases as render an opening Medicine necessary to be occasionally taken, it will be best administered at Bedtime; that the Operation of the Medicine may be over before the Waters are taken in the Morning.—One Thing farther may be proper to mention, that little or no Supper should then be taken.

For

For their own Sakes I hope they will act otherwise\*.

There is another Mistake, and in my humble Opinion a great one too, although it has received the Sanction of Men whose Judgment upon most Occasions is not to be doubted: I mean, that of taking off the Chill of the Chalybeate Water, by adding boiling Water: it immediately becomes turbid, and in some Degree the Chalybeate is decomposed; which in a great Measure destroys the Efficacy of the Spring. I rather think this Advice has been given by Way of Indulgence to their Patients, and contrary to their own better Judgments.—It is, however, my Duty to speak of the Error, and to caution the Readers against this mistaken Practice.

Having now pointed out the Use, as well as the Abuse, of the native Chalybeate Waters, and having likewise added those Remarks which at present occur to me, for the Government of such Invalids as are not better informed, I shall take my Leave of this Subject; and if the loose Hints thrown out in these few Pages should prove beneficial in chronic Complaints, and tend to relieve the Infirmities of Human Nature, I shall be happy to think that my Time has been so well employed.

\* It is much to be wished some Amusement could be pointed out, that should invite Invalids to be continually in Motion, while they are at the Wells. Dancing is too violent, and (medically speaking) too irregular a Motion, to answer the Purpose; but some active Pursuit might possibly be found out, if the Company were to pay a proper Attention to the Necessity of it.